

**ACTIVE news**

Government Documents



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**THE ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR TECHNICAL-VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN TEXAS****COMMISSIONER ADDRESSES COUNCIL**

The New Commissioner of Education told the Advisory Council for Technical-Vocational Education that it "should have one foot on the ground at all times and the other one in space." He explained: "You should have all of your recommendations based upon reality, but they should be on the cutting edge -- the ideas should be new and innovative."

Alton Bowen minced no words in covering subjects ranging from duties, role and scope of advisory committees and professional educators to intervention by federal government in state education. He was speaking at the ACTIVE's September meeting.

He said he felt there needs to be a certain amount of tension between the advisor and the implementor, as well as between vocational practitioners, agency vocational administrators, professional organizations, and the ACTIVE.

He went on to stress the importance of advisory committees -- at both the state and local levels: "...war is too important to be left to generals and education is too important to be left to professional educators, because we have biases and vested interests and these come through loud and clear. So, we should be listening to the lay citizenry -- the users of education. Our forefathers established education to be controlled by...not educators...but by lay citizens elected by the citizens to represent the people."

The Commissioner asked for the Advisory Council's "creative thinking and recommendations" in six different areas:

(1) How do we attract highly skilled craftsmen away from industry and into teaching? He said he felt offering two years of credit for experience was too little to offer -- not a "bold" enough step.

(2) How can we remove the stigma from vocational education and the idea that vocational education is for somebody else's kid?

He suggested one way might be to honor outstanding skilled students, as is done for scholastic achievers.

(3) How do we get appropriate input from business and industry on the types of skills needed in the world of work? "People in business and industry must be involved in vocational education."

(4) We need to know how best to evaluate what we are doing in vocational education. How do we deliver vocational services to all students? The people are demanding that their institutions be accountable. He said he had instructed members of the TEA staff to work with ACTIVE members "to come up with an evaluation design that would tell us how well or how poorly we are doing in the various areas of vocational education."

(5) How can we best meet the special vocational needs of disadvantaged and handicapped children? What do we need to do to make handicapped children productive citizens?

(6) How do we cope with federal encroachment on education? "Education is a constitutionally reserved power of the state. The federal government is paying 10% of the cost of education, and, in my opinion, it wants 100% of the management and control. I believe that neither federal nor state government should control education, but it should be left at the local level."

In discussing the need for redirection in vocational education, he said he had "racked" his brain to remember one thing that had ever been dropped from the curriculum in his 37 years in education. The Commissioner said a committee has been established to study curriculum in the schools to decide what is outdated and what is pertinent. Membership will include representatives from the State Legislature and State Board of Education. They, in turn, will involve lay citizens from across the state.

Commissioner Bowen discussed the "back



to basics" push in education and said that is what should be delivered -- after it is determined what "basics" are maximally. Minimally, they are reading, writing and arithmetic.

He reiterated, "We need to find out what it is that parents are saying to us and we should give them what it is they are asking for. And, if it is wrong, they have a right in a democracy to be wrong. They are the ones that call the tune and

we should always remember that. We in professional education are inclined to do the user's thinking for him. That is not our role. I have concluded in my 37 years in education, if there is any genius in education...and there is...it is local control, as bad as it is in some places."

The Commissioner closed by saying he appreciated the time and work contributed by ACTIVE members and that the advice given is "valued."

## COUNCIL SETS STATEWIDE CONFERENCE

A statewide conference entitled, "Industry Speaks to Education," is being organized by the Advisory Council for Technical-Vocational Education. It is scheduled for February 12-13 in the Municipal Auditorium in Austin.

The Council is hoping to involve the Governor's Office as one of the sponsoring organizations. Numerous industry, labor and education representatives and associations are being contacted for their suggestions as to structure and program content.

Emphasis will be on what industry needs from education and vice versa. Tentative conference objectives include:

1. To examine employment requirements according to occupational areas with industry, business, labor and education, to determine appropriate action for future developments in vocational, technical, adult and manpower training.
  - a). Investigate level of specific skills required according to occupational areas.
  - b). Identify educational experiences which contribute to specific employability skills

by occupational areas.

2. To promote a unified approach in meeting the employability needs of the state's work force.
3. To stimulate interagency cooperation for improving coordination among agencies directly involved in manpower training and education.
4. To disseminate practical information about and alternate solutions to complex problems facing those concerned with quality and quantity vocational education programs in Texas.

The above objectives are just the preliminary working ideas. They may be changed or expanded upon as input is received from the various participant groups during the organizational stages.

If you have suggestions for the program, participants, or persons to be invited, please include the following information and mail to Angie Grace, P.O. Box 1886, Austin, 78767: Name, Title, Address, City, State, Zip, and Telephone Number.

The ACTIVE is most anxious for your input on this project and strongly solicits your suggestions.

## Teachers Vocal During Hearings

Vocational teachers and counselors were quite vocal about certification policies and a variety of other issues during the "Teachers Speak" hearings held this summer as a part of the vocational inservice workshops.

Over 1,000 secondary and post-secondary level teachers and counselors took advantage of an invitation to speak out about their problems, concerns, activities and success stories, with the assurance their comments would not fall on barren ground.



The hearings were sponsored by the Advisory Council for Technical-Vocational Education in Texas. The comments voiced will be summarized in the Council's annual reports this year to the Governor and State Board of Education.

The Council had not completed transcribing all the tapes from the hearings at press time, so, keep in mind that this list is only partial.

Several persons questioned the validity of having to go back and take so many courses for certification when they already had degrees and/or certification in another vocational education program. This would mean repeat work.

It was suggested that a review committee be set up to examine each certification request and applicant's background to determine what courses are or are not needed. This would preclude requiring everyone to take every course, regardless of educational background.

Another problem voiced with certification was that of the distance involved in getting to the courses. It was suggested that certification courses be standardized so that teachers wouldn't have to travel so far to get required courses in their program.

Several teachers echoed "parallel courses are offered in each program area so why not standardize them?" This would help the teacher who had to travel 300 miles round trip to take a course that was essentially being offered at other closer institutions but in different program areas.

The following is a laundry list of some concerns voiced by vocational teachers and counselors at the hearings:

- more funding is needed for salaries, travel, equipment, facilities, and instructional materials.
- more vocational counselors are needed. Many students are siphoned off into general education without the benefit of having been told about vocational education.
- improve public relations with parents, students, legislators, community.
- start utilizing area vocational schools by solving transportation and scheduling problems.
- start career ed/occupational orientation earlier in school -- in the elementary grades. And mandate it!
- aides are needed to help handicapped students in vocational education pro-

grams.

- travel pay is needed for middle school counselors and occupational orientation teachers.
- better dissemination of research material -- written in lay language -- so it can be utilized by classroom teachers.
- put less emphasis on "number" game by lowering quota of 20 required in each class. CVAE teachers reported that it is often hard to get and keep 20 students in each class due to high drop-out rates. Others said, "if we have 15 well-qualified students in a program, it would be nice not to have to ask five warm bodies to make up the difference."
- interpretation of federal and state laws should be uniform and not left to the whim of each individual school district. There is no uniformity.
- give teachers opportunity for input in planning the inservice meetings.
- receive pay for work experience required for certification.
- call for change in insurance laws so that 15-17-year-old students can work in skilled areas.
- spend more time with VEH students.
- allow teachers, not supervisors, to order equipment.
- write instructional materials so students can read and understand them.
- put more emphasis on teaching a student how to work -- not just placement in job field.
- start math-related courses.
- rework student follow-up procedures to make them fair and comprehensive. As it is now, some programs feel they are getting shortchanged.
- treat students as people -- not dummies. Need to respect them and not belittle them because of mistakes.
- need to teach students how to get along with people.
- stress leadership programs and get students involved in student organizations.
- upgrade older vocational education programs, as well as starting new ones.
- address problem of severe shortage of pre-employment lab teachers.
- recommend that the nurse aide program be extended to two years in high school.



# HERE AND THERE

## DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION CREATED --

A new Department of Education is a reality after the House of Representatives voted 215-201 for its creation. The American Vocational Association had been working hard for its passage. Proponents said it will mean an increase in prestige, influence and money for vocational education. It will give all factions of education greater visibility and with that, it is hoped, increased federal appropriations. Now, a search for a department head will get underway in earnest.

**FUNDING APPROVED --** House and Senate conferees resolved differences over fiscal 1980 funding for employment and training programs in their two versions of the Labor-HEW funding bill.

Conferees settled upon \$556.2 million for vocational education state grants and \$124.8 million for vocational education program improvement and support services. The overall total for vocational education is \$776.9 million. The conferees agreed

on \$8.127 billion for the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act.

The bill must now go back to both houses for approval of the conference agreement, and there are some possible hang-ups over other issues in the bill.

**AVA CONVENTION NEARS --** The 73rd Annual Convention of the American Vocational Association will be held November 30 to December 4 in Anaheim, California. An estimated 9,000 vocational educators from across the country will attend.

For more information on the program and group flight arrangements, contact Will Reece, TVTA, Suite 311, 2101 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78741, (512)443-4214.

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